

the son of a certain Michael and Theodula of Antioch, Both he and his father served for some years Temirn the Zirid prince of Al Mahdia, under whom the young George was charged with the administration of the finances, in which office, he became familiar with the Arabic tongue, the sea-ports of the whole African coast, and the internal weakness of the Moslem states. In 1108, Temim died; George was not sure of the favour of his successor, Yahya, and betook himself in 1108 to Sicily, where he was favourably received by the court, From that moment he became a devoted servant of Roger and a deadly and relentless enemy of the African princes,¹

The raising of a fleet from the maritime towns was entrusted to the two Greeks; a title was found for them from the old sea-emirs of the Moslem governments and they exercised naval command as *ammimti* or admirals,

An energetic policy was forced upon Roger; it was necessary to protect the growing trade of Sicily with the South Mediterranean countries, to put down the Moslem corsairs, who made the sea unsafe for pilgrims and merchants, and to repulse such raids as, in 1113, the ships of Al Mahdia

had made upon Salerno and Naples,
The inter-
necine wars of the North African states

him
his chance, The Zirid princes of Tunis,
formerly
so powerful, had been driven out of
their

*For the two admirals see Cohn, *Dfa*
GescMckto 4\$r mrmtn*
Flotte (1910), pp, 98-100.